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## BOOK REVIEWS

TOWARDS RACIAL HEALTH. A Handbook on the Training of Boys and Girls, Parents, Teachers and Social Workers. By Norah H. March, B.Sc., M. R. Soc. I. With a Foreword by J. Arthur Thompson, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Natural History in the University of Aberdeen. New American Edition, with an Introduction by Evangeline N. Young, M.D.

The work that Miss March has done for parents, teachers, and for all who are interested in the sane sex-education of the younger generation, can only be estimated by the readers of her book *Towards Racial Health*, which has been presented to the public in a new American edition. The startling statistics which have recently been revealed in regard to the physical condition and the morals of so many of the young men who made up the draft army of 1917 are striking materials for proof that the former policy of silence in regard to sex matters has been a total failure. The conclusion of the army surgeons that these conditions are the result of the greatest ignorance and lack of sex-education will cause every responsible person to welcome a book like Miss March's, with its suggestions for opening a subject of such importance and of such complexity to the child mind.

The necessity for the coöperation of the home, the school, and society in general, is not over-emphasized. In the home the parent has his own particular phase of the problem to meet, and the individuality of the child determines the manner in which the question must be considered. The natural curiosity of the child can best be satisfied by one who is in intimate contact with him and who has a confidential, sympathetic understanding of him. There are far too many parents to-day, even among well-educated people, who, although realizing the need for suitable sex-education of the child, feel that they are unable to attempt it themselves, either through lack of suitable training or through an unfortunate lack of sympathy with the child. To many of these, the clear, simple presentation of the materials of this book will appeal strongly.

To some parents the chapters on the mental and physical development of the child will be of some benefit in making

clear to them the significance of the bodily changes and the accompanying changes in the child's mind, and in this way open the road to a better consideration of his mental outlook. The petty problems that interfere with the child's endeavor are more readily understood and a more sympathetic attitude taken toward them.

The ideal situation in regard to sex-education should be one in which the school supplements the work already done in the home. Here the educator would find the way paved by the careful parent, and under the direction of competent teachers a more detailed and scientific treatment would serve to emphasize the facts which are already understood. Almost every branch of knowledge includes many references to the problems of sex-life, from which lessons of high ideals and ethics can be taught. Literature is teeming with examples which a careful teacher cannot fail to recognize and make use of. The most logical situation for sex-education as such is in Nature Study, or in some general course in biology, of which sex and sexual problems form an integral part. In the chapters on Nature Study in her book Miss March considers in detail the possible material for dealing with questions on the origin of life as they come up in the child's mind. Many of the examples which have been chosen are those which are familiar to the child in the plant and animal world about him:—

“The study of animal types reveals the evolution of sex. I do not propose to outline an exact scheme of work in this connection, but to give a brief account of some animals which lend themselves very easily and felicitously to our purpose, and to indicate how it may be possible to pass gradually from the study of plants, flowers, and seed-making to the study of animals. A selection of types may be made, all of which may be dealt with so as to form a gradual approach to the mammalian animal and so to Man, for what applies biologically to the mammal applies also to Man.”

This indicated outline is an excellent one, not only because of the material which is presented, but because it indicates a method which would create a respectful attitude to the marvels of life in every phase, including sex. Closely allied to these sim-

ple facts of biology are the ethical and social sides of the question, both of which are influenced for the better by a knowledge of them.

Education for Parenthood is a chapter which is useful in the education of the more mature young person. Seldom is there found a single student of this type to whom the laws and facts relating to heredity are uninteresting. The many examples of inheritance in man—eye-color, feeble-mindedness, brachydactylia—furnish foundations for consideration of problems that are more nearly related to the ethical and sociological conditions of life. An even, brief survey of the Nama, the Jukes, or the Kalikaks, brings the moral considerations vividly before the individual, since the terrible results, to so many innocent victims, of a single lapse from moral law are clearly portrayed.

Grave social conditions exist not only in small hamlets, but in the more populous cities, and too often are neglected or unnoticed, although they constitute an ever-present menace to child-life. These words of Miss March are of special interest: "We must face our social problems frankly. Social workers, teachers,—in fact, all who may hope to wield an effective influence over the lives of boys and girls,—are called upon to view their lives and circumstances faithfully, and, guided by an understanding of their lives, their feelings, and their needs, to act in ready sympathy and wise conduct. A knowledge of the enemies we are fighting, of the forces that are against us, will strengthen us, and will help us to make our teaching and our cause of child-life more securely effective."

In her book Miss March lays stress upon the importance of instilling the power of self-control into the child as a very important adjunct in sex-education. How often can the life of a young man be wrecked because this habit was not firmly fixed in childhood! . . . "Self-control is no swift-grown product of later years: any power of self-mastery which an adult may possess and the ease with which it may react to temptation, is the expression of power which has been long years in formulating itself. . . . It is not only for physical reasons that greediness and selfishness should be restrained, but such training is bound to have a practical moral reaction."

This book is not written as a cure-all for all the evils that possess society, but furnishes many suggestions which will be found of great value in educating the child so that he may develop into a useful member of the future race. A. G. WILLEY.

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THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS. By James I. Vance, D.D., Nashville, Tenn. New York: Fleming H. Revell. 1918.

Dr. Vance, the distinguished divine, has given in this, his latest book, a very readable and inspiring account of his experiences in overseas service with the American Expeditionary Forces. The general theme of the work is clearly set forth in the following lines of the Foreword:—

“The Hun’s war cross is made of iron, but he has edged this iron cross with silver. The iron of the cross is still iron and the silver remains silver; but the iron and the silver touch each other in the iron cross, as a bar of sunshine sometimes touches the edge of a storm cloud.

“Thus is it with war. There is a silver edge to its iron cross. Amid all the unspeakable horrors of the World War there may be discovered by the eye that looks for the invisible, blessings that are imperishable and a glory which war-clouds cannot dim.”

Through the succeeding chapters, with their vividly pictured scenes, the author’s purpose has not been to give a detailed account of his movements, or statistical matter with regard to war-work activities. He has endeavored, rather, to present a succession of interesting scenes, and to find in these the suggestion for an inspiring spiritual message from the field of war. The book is tonic in its effect. Its optimistic tone, its deep spirituality, its fine tenderness, coupled with splendid manliness, and its clear-sighted vision of the great and eternal verities of the life of the spirit, make it a book of vital truth and helpfulness in this period of world-wide recovery from the horrors and the burdens of war.

It is a book of dominant religious feeling, but a book so wise and human in its presentation that it must find acceptance with every reader who responds to the touch of genuine feeling. Whether the author is sketching scenes upon the Rhine, glimpses